GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6007
ANSWERED ON:06.05.2002
PRIVATISATION OF WATER MANAGEMENT
A. VENKATESH NAIK;ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY;ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL;NARESH KUMAR PUGLIA;SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI;SHYAMA SINGH;SUNDER LAL TIWARI

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the move of privatisation of water management is likely to result in the collapse of the Agriculture Sector in the country;

(b) whether the Panchayats have opposed the privatisation of water management in the country;

(c) if so, the circumstances under which the Government propose to privatise the water management; and

(d) the provisions being made to ensure that farmers and also such other people do not face any difficulty for use of water?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) to (d) With the increase in the cost of creating irrigation potential per hectare, the requirement of funds for irrigation sector which plays an important role in enhancing agricultural productivity, has been increasing. Due to financial constraints, the State Governments are unable to make sufficient budgetary provisions for extension of irrigation facilities to new areas. For meeting the financial requirements of the irrigation sector, the National Water Policy provides for greater private sector participation in planning, development and management of water resources. Further, half the irrigation potential created in the country so far has been achieved by harnessing ground water resources. About 90% of ground water development has been through farmers' initiatives, and self funding through National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and other co-operative Banks. In certain cases financial resources from the private sector have been generated by issue of bonds like in the case of Krishna Bhagya Jal Nigam Ltd., Sardar Sarovar Nirman Nigam Ltd. etc. In order to mobilize more funds from the private sector National Water Policy envisages the involvement and encouragement of the private sector entities, such as water user associations, water cooperatives and certain other stake-holder private institutions in the irrigation sector.

The interse role of the private sectors vis-a-vis the water users associations and other farmers' organizations needs to be evolved. Providing irrigation water in bulk quantities, to water user associations to be further managed by the farmers themselves, is one such interface. The National Water Policy also envisages involvement of stake-holders including farmers, right from the planning stage, and as such any involvement of the private sector will have to be in consultation with the farmers.